

Capsule Summary
SM-641
Prospect Hill Tobacco House
Leonardtown Vicinity
Private
(Page 1)

c. 1790-1815, 1880-1890

The Prospect Hill Tobacco House is a telescoping, three part, frame agricultural building constructed during two discrete building periods. Located on the south side of Knight Road near Leonardtown, Maryland, the building consists of a c. 1790-1815 tobacco house which is sandwiched between a c. 1880-1890 dairy barn and an open shed.

Similar in construction to the De La Brooke Tobacco Barn (SM-411), the original section of the Prospect Hill Tobacco House is composed of a 16 by 32 foot main block with an original 12 foot shed. Diagnostic features of late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth century construction include a hewn and pit-sawn frame, tilted false plate, wrought fasteners, and evidence of vertical nailers for horizontal clapboard. This very same barn may have been described in 1826 after the death of Lewis Ford. The assessors of his estate noted that on a tract called "part of Gilmoth Hills" featured a "...Barn 16 by 32 with a ten foot shed the whole length on each side..."¹

In 1886, the St. Mary's Beacon noted that Prospect Hill had been purchased by Mr. George Pabst, a native of New York. Pabst dramatically improved the farm in only a few months for in that same year the newspaper noted that he was building "his temporary house, barn, and outbuilding."² It was most likely at this point that Pabst attached a large two story frame barn ringed by a brick foundation and entirely sheathed with vertical board-and-batten siding to the original tobacco house. The original section received similar siding and windows to create a more homogeneous exterior. Harry Knight, a one time occupant of the farm, remembers hearing that the

¹ St. Mary's County, Register of Wills, Annual Valuation of Real Estate and Personal Property, 1826-1841, Liber EJM 1, Folio 7.

² St. Mary's Beacon, v47: 307, p3, c2, 14 October 1886.

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—

new barn was originally used for dairy cattle. Architectural evidence appears to confirm this as both the north and south elevations are pierced by a series of six-over-six, double-hung sash windows and hay lift is visible on the expansive second floor. Both the windows and the hay lift represented the necessities of a dairy operation. Sometime after its initial construction Pabst's barn was modified for the curing of tobacco.

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SM-641, Prospect Hill Tobacco House
St. Mary's County
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization:	Western Shore
Chronological/Developmental Period:	Rural Agrarian Intensification, 1680-1815 Agricultural-Industrial Transition, 1815-1870
Historic Period Theme:	Agriculture Architecture

Resource Type

Category:	Building
Historic Environment:	Rural
Historic Function and Use:	Tobacco House
Known Design Source:	None

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. SM-641

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Prospect Hill, Gilmotts Hills, Gilmoth's Hills

and/or common Prospect Hill Tobacco House (pref.)

2. Location

1 mile SE of intersection of Knight and Bull Road, on south side of Knight Rd. not for publication

city, town Leonardtown x vicinity of congressional district 3

state Maryland county St. Mary's TM-40, G-17, P-94, Lot 1

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u> </u> district	<u> </u> public	<u> x </u> occupied	<u> x </u> agriculture
<u> x </u> building(s)	<u> x </u> private	<u> </u> unoccupied	<u> </u> commercial
<u> </u> structure	<u> </u> both	<u> </u> work in progress	<u> </u> educational
<u> </u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u> </u> entertainment
<u> </u> object	<u> </u> in process	<u> x </u> yes: restricted	<u> </u> government
	<u> </u> being considered	<u> </u> yes: unrestricted	<u> </u> industrial
	<u> x </u> not applicable	<u> </u> no	<u> </u> military
			<u> </u> museum
			<u> </u> park
			<u> </u> private residence
			<u> </u> religious
			<u> </u> scientific
			<u> </u> transportation
			<u> </u> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Mark H. Henderson, Jr.

street & number 223 Lake Drive telephone no.: 301-475-7967

city, town Leonardtown state and zip code Maryland 20650

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse liber EWA 1026

street & number folio 555

city, town Leonardtown state Md

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. SM-641

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Contributing Resource Count: 1

The Prospect Hill Tobacco House is located approximately 0.5 miles southeast of the intersection of Knight Road and Bull Road near Leonardtown, Maryland. Situated on a rolling cultivated tract, the building is approached via a 0.1 mile long dirt farm road that extends south from Knight Road. While the road terminates at the Prospect Hill Farmhouse (SM-639), the tobacco house is actually situated on the west side of the drive. Directly to the east of the barn is the Prospect Hill tenant house (SM-640). The telescoping barn building is oriented on a north/south axis and is surrounded on three sides by cultivated fields and on the fourth side by a wooded tract. Once part of a series of agricultural work buildings, the barn presently stands alone as the other buildings were destroyed by a possible tornado.

The Prospect Hill tobacco house expresses the changes in tobacco house construction between the eighteenth and late-nineteenth century. The original building, erected c. 1790, was a single aisle, dirt floored, gable front building oriented on an east/west axis. It measures sixteen by thirty-two feet with an original twelve foot shed. The original foundation probably consisted of field stone and architectural evidence confirms the structure's sheathing consisted of horizontal clapboard attached to the frame with wrought nails. The common rafter roof was originally covered with either clapboard or riven shingles, but is currently sheathed with raised seam metal. Coinciding with a change in the property's ownership during the 1880s or 1890s, this original barn was dwarfed and sandwiched between a large new, two story tobacco barn and a shed addition. The larger barn, situated on the building's east side, is competently underpinned with a brick foundation and sheathed with vertical board-and-batten siding attached to the frame with mature cut nails. Constructed of circular sawn lumber, this three aisle building featured a raised seam metal roof. The frame shed addition was constructed on the west side of the original tobacco house and was only partially enclosed with vertical siding in order to facilitate equipment storage. The c. 1790 barn was also altered during this period. These alterations included stripping off the original siding, replacing it with board-and-batten siding, adding structural braces, removing a sill, and constructing a matching shed on the south elevation.

While modified in the 1890s, the most significant structural components of the c. 1790 tobacco house remain intact. The original building was raised in four undifferentiated bays. The spacing between the bays are ten foot centers with the exception of a eastern most component which was raised on a twelve foot center. Each of the bays consist of a hewn seven-by-eight inch post mortised and tenoned into an eight-by-ten inch sill which, in turn, is supported by a partially visible stone foundation with later brick infill. The posts are also mortise and double-tenoned into the wall plate. Only the two gable end bays feature transverse down-braces which are half-dovetailed and lapped into the post and sill. A large mortise in the sill and tie beam and situated between these two braces marks the location of one of the possibly two entries into the building. Further transverse support is established through a series of structural ties that are lapped over and pegged into each of the wall plates. Set on four foot centers, these hewn members measure six-by-four inches and extend two feet, six inches beyond the wall surface of the building. These braces, as well as the corresponding rafter pairs above them demarcate the "rooms" for the drying of tobacco. Longitudinal support did not come from down or up bracing, but through three different methods. First, a horizontal rail, meant for supporting tobacco ties, links each of the bays. This

8. Significance

Survey No. SM-641

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☒ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Prospect Hill Tobacco House is a telescoping, three part, frame agricultural building constructed during two discrete building periods. Located on the south side of Knight Road near Leonardtown, Maryland, the building consists of a c. 1790-1815 tobacco house which is sandwiched between a c. 1880-1890 dairy barn and an open shed.

Similar in construction to the De La Brooke Tobacco Barn (SM-411), the Prospect Hill Tobacco House is composed of a 16 by 32 foot main block with an original 12 foot shed. Diagnostic features of late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth century construction include a hewn and pit-sawn frame, tilted false plate, wrought fasteners, and evidence of vertical nailers for horizontal clapboard. This very same barn may have been described in 1826 after the death of Lewis Ford. The assessors of his estate noted that on a tract called "part of Gilmoth Hills" featured a "...Barn 16 by 32 with a ten foot shed the whole length on each side..."¹

In 1886, the St. Mary's Beacon noted that Prospect Hill had been purchased by Mr. George Pabst, a native of New York. Pabst dramatically improved the farm in only a few months for in that same year the newspaper noted that he was building "his temporary house, barn, and outbuilding."² It was most likely at this point that Pabst attached a large two story frame barn ringed by a brick foundation and entirely sheathed with vertical board-and-batten siding to the original tobacco house. Harry Knight, a one time occupant of the farm, remembers hearing that the barn was originally used as a dairy. Architectural evidence appears to confirm this, as both the north and south elevations are pierced by a series of six-over-six, double-hung sash windows which permitted adequate air and light into the building. A hay lift can also still be seen on the second floor. Sometime after its initial construction, this section was modified for the curing of tobacco. When this newer section was built, the original barn was modified to present a more homogeneous exterior appearance as board-and-batten siding as well as windows was added. An open equipment shed was also constructed to the west of the original building.

*SEE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING DRAWER FOR DRAWINGS.

¹ St. Mary's County, Register of Wills, Annual Valuation of Real Estate & Personal Property, 1826-1841, Liber EJM 1, Folio 7.

² St. Mary's Beacon, v47: 307, p3, c2, 14 October 1886.

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St. Mary's County
7.1 Description

rail is only interrupted once as it is lapped around one post and mortise-tenoned into another. While probably meant to support tobacco poles, the member nonetheless provides lateral rigidity. Second, a continuous horizontal wall plate links each of the bays and forms the primary means of longitudinal support. Lastly, robbed bevel lap joints in the plate and blind mortises in the sill reveal that a series of nailers, set on two foot centers, linked the sill to the plate. Used for attaching the horizontal clapboard to the building, these nailers, in concert with the clapboard, would have supplied further stability. Interestingly, when these nailers were removed, a series of down braces were employed on the south side of the structure.

Resting on the transverse structural ties is the most diagnostic feature of the original barn and the primary means of support for the common rafter roof. A hewn, four-by-four inch tilted-false plate is pegged into each individual tie. Four-by-two inch, hewn and pit-sawn rafters, which are half-lapped over the plate, are nailed to the member using two wrought nails. While the pairs are on two foot centers, every other rafter pair features three sets of collars which are half-lapped and nailed with wrought nails into the rafters. The intervening rafters feature only a single set of robbed half-lap joints and no other sets of collars. An open mortise joint binds each of the rafter pairs at the peak. There is no evidence for lateral wind bracing.

Extending approximately twelve feet to the north of the c. 1790 structure is an original shed. The shed is supported by a series of five, six-by-five inch posts which are seated into a hewn sill. These posts are also mortised into a six-by-four inch plate which, in turn, supports a series of hewn and pit-sawn rafters. These rafters are merely butted onto the individual rafters of the main block and are birdsmouthed over the plate of the shed, thus creating a distinct change in the pitch of building's roof. The shed currently houses a number of pens for domestic animals.

During the 1890s update of the building, several changes were made to the building. First, the original horizontal clapboard was probably removed as were the nailers. Second, due to significant deterioration to the south part of the building, the tilted false plate was removed and replaced and a number of circular sawn down braces were installed between the posts. All of these repairs were covered by a shed addition. Probably one of the most potentially damaging changes came when the sill, plate, and down braces of the east gable end were removed to accommodate a tractor entrance. Lastly, due to sagging sills, bricks similar to those found on the 1890s barn were placed underneath in an attempt to stem deterioration.

The c. 1890 barn represents an interesting comparison to its predecessor to the south. Its larger size, two stories, flatter roof pitch, circular sawn frame, and lack of structural bracing belie its 1890s origins. Constructed on a brick foundation, this newer structure features vertical board-and-batten siding attached to the frame with mature cut nails. The raised-seam metal covered roof is pierced by a louvered cupola. The first floors of the north and south elevations each exhibit four window openings that were originally six-over-six, double-hung sash. While the sash are no longer in situ, these openings still retain their beaded surrounds. A north/south transverse tractorway, located at the junction between the two barns, extends the width of the newer barn and could be covered by a door (on both elevations) hung on overhead rollers. Interestingly, this tractorway permitted entrance into the east gable end of the c. 1790 barn. It also accessed the newer barn's interior through a door with overhead rollers. The second floor of the north and south elevations is pierced by three window openings. The east gable end features two tractorways without doors and no window openings. The west gable end is joined to the c. 1790 barn and is notably constructed of a series of earthfast posts which support the second floor

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St. Mary's County
7.2 Description

structural members.

Judging from the barn's framing, fenestration, attention to detail, as well as oral history, it appears the structure was originally intended to serve as a dairy barn but was modified to later serve as a tobacco barn. The interior of the barn features two longitudinal aisles with dirt floors separated in the middle by a floored central aisle. Tobacco poles strung up on the ceiling with wire on the first floor demarcate nine four foot rooms. While two tiers of poles could be accommodated on the first floor, five tiers could be utilized on the second floor. Entered via a ladder located in the transverse tractorway, the second floor still features a hay lift as it was once used for the storage of hay to serve the dairy below.

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St. Mary's County
8.1 Significance

Chain-of-Title

(All deeds are located at the Land Records Office, St. Mary's County Courthouse, Leonardtown, Maryland unless otherwise noted.)

Reference: Liber EWA 1026, Folio 555

Grantee: Mark H. Henderson, Jr.

Grantor: Knight Family Limited Partnership

Date: September 26, 1995

Notes: This deed includes the transfer of 163 acres which consists of parcels 94, 151, 196, and 195 on tax map 40. A provision is also made for Mary Elizabeth Johnson, a tenant on the property, to remain on the property for the remainder of her life.

Reference: Liber MRB 273, Folio 261

Grantee: Knight Family Limited Partnership

Grantor: Janet D. Knight

Date: June 13, 1977

Notes: Two parcels are sold to the Knight family. The 164 acre parcel called "Prospect Hill" is the tract where the site is located.

Reference: Liber JMM 11, Folio 391

Grantee: Harold and Janet D. Knight

Grantor: William G. Fenwick

Date: April 12, 1939

Reference: Liber JMM, 11, Folio 391

Grantee: William G. Fenwick

Grantor: Harold and Janet D. Knight

Date: April 12, 1939

Reference: Liber JMM 7, Folio 201

Grantee: Harold Knight

Grantor: Harry E. and Helen Wray Knight

Date: January 13, 1931

Notes: Prospect Hill is listed as containing 244.68 acres.

Reference: Will Record Liber BC 1, Folio 239

Grantee: Harry E. Knight

Grantor: Mary A. Knight

Date: April 12, 1899

Notes: Mary A. Knight devises much of her estate to Harry E. Knight.

Reference: Liber EBA 16, Folio 198

Grantee: Mary A. Knight

Grantor: Thomas M. Purnell, et al

Date: April 11, 1917

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St. Mary's County
8.2 Significance

Reference: Liber EBA 14, Folio 74
Grantee: Thomas M. Purnell, et al
Grantor: Helen O. Pabst (of Jersey City)
Date: June 11, 1915

Reference: Liber JFF 12, Folio 209
Grantee: Helen O. Pabst
Grantor: George F. Pabst
Date: September 9, 1890

Reference: Liber JFF 9, Folio 61
Grantee: George F. Pabst (of Jersey City)
Grantor: J. Thomas Abell
Date: April 12, 1886

Reference: Liber JFF 6, Folio 486
Grantee: J. Thomas Abell
Grantor: Mary P. Wathen
Date: September 1, 1883
Notes: Here the property is listed as containing 243 acres +/- . Unfortunately, the deed does not contain a bean clause.

Reference: Liber JTB 2, Folio 249
Grantee: Mary P. Wathen
Grantor: George C. Morgan
Date: March 4, 1856
Notes: Called "Prospect Hill" the property contains 276 acres.

Reference: Liber JTB 2, Folio 246
Grantee: George C. Morgan
Grantor: Robert H. Wathen
Date: March 4, 1856

Reference: Liber JTB 1, Folio 709
Grantee: Robert H. Wathen
Grantor: Clement Wathen
Date: May 30, 1854

Reference: Liber WTM 2, Folio 256-257
Grantee: Clement and Robert H. Wathen
Grantor: Mary L. Ford (widow of Dr. Joseph Ford)
Date: January 15, 1850
Notes: Here the property is called "Gilmotts Hills" or "Prospect Hill" and is listed as containing 316 acres. During the division of Lewis Ford's estate, Lot #1 which contained the above tract was purchased by Dr. Joseph Ford from John H. Turner.

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St. Mary's County
8.3 Significance

Reference: Liber JH 12, Folio 279-281

Grantee: John H. Turner

Grantor: George W. Morgan, Sheriff

Date: February 13, 1838

Notes: Part of Gilmotts Hills (otherwise called Prospect Hill) was designated as Lot #1. It features 316 acres.

SM-641, Prospect Hill Tobacco House
St. Mary's County
8.4 Significance

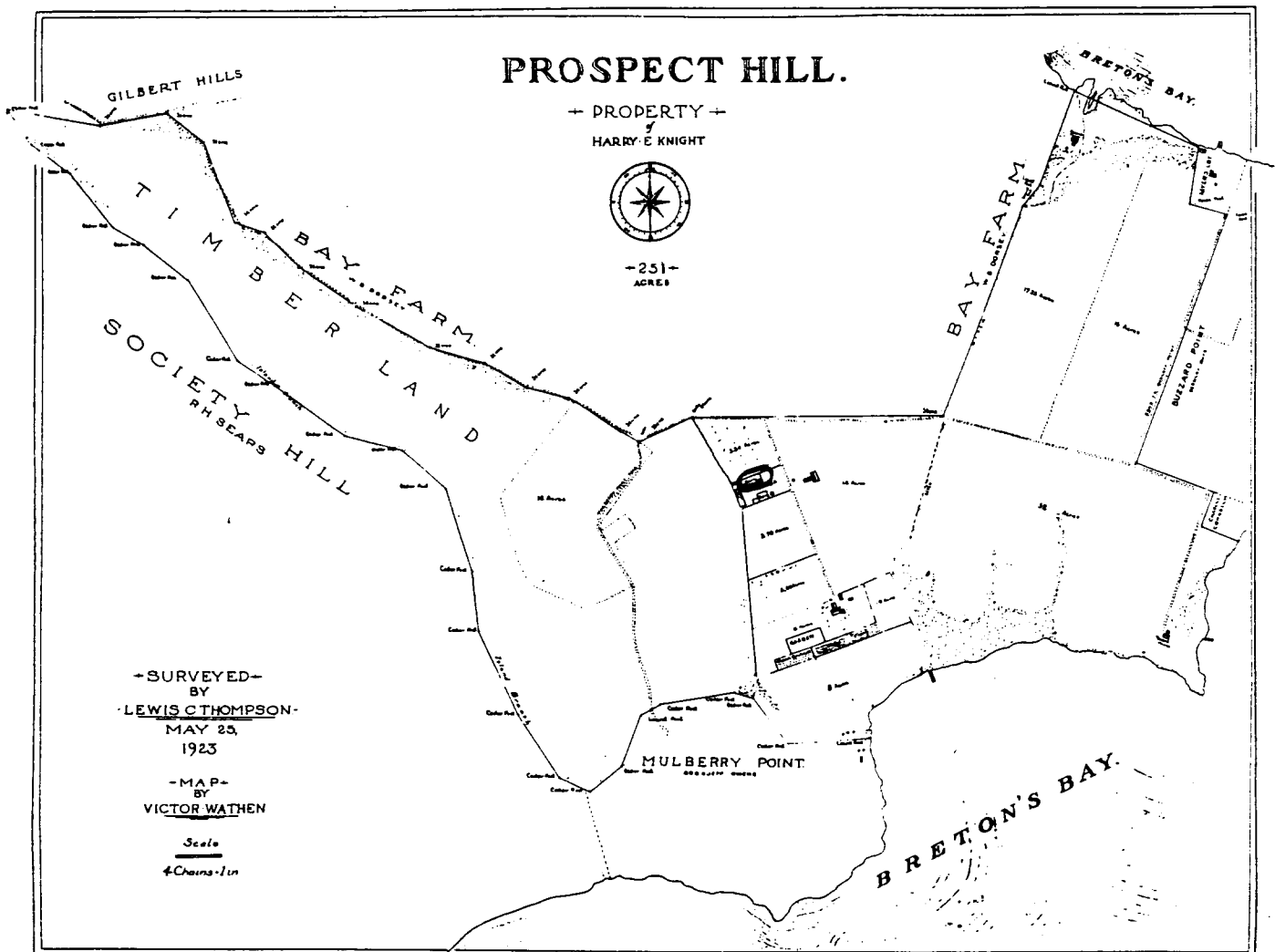


Figure 1. Map and survey of the Knight Farm. The Prospect Hill Tobacco House is located on the west side of the farm road and on the north side of the courtyard.



SM-641

Prospect Hill Tobacco House

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

May/98

chd SHPO

E + S elevations

1 of 4



SM-641

Prospect Hill Tobacco House

St Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

c May/98

and SHPO

E + N elevations

2 of 4



SM-641

Prospect Hill Tobacco House

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

May/98

Md SHPO

Interior - tilted false plate - looking W

3 of 4



SM-641

Prospect Hill Tobacco House

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

May/98

chd SHPD

Interior - tilted false plate - looking W

4 of 4